THE
WRESTLING FLYER
NEWSLETTER

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NEW CHAMPS, NEW ANGLES, NEW COMERS AT WWF TAPINGS

Many different situations arose at the Superstars of Wrestling tv tapings held in Worcester, MA, on July 20. In a surprise move, the Natural Disasters defeated Money Inc. to capture the WWF Tag Team Championships when Quake pinned IRS after an elbow-drop. This leaves a lot of confusion as Money Inc was scheduled to meet LOD at SummerSlam, with most thinking LOD was going to get the belts. The match was taped under the Prime Time Wrestling banners and later in the taping the Disasters wrestled a squash match as the new WWF Tag Team Champions. Initially, Earthquake & Typhoon were going to meet the Beverly Brothers at Slam, but that would be a weak championship match. It is surprising to most insiders because the Quaker & Typhoid aren't exactly "model" champions, because Titan in the past hasn't given belts to guys who are immensely overweight and remember, Earthquake was once described as looking like an overblown wart hog.

There were also a series of angles shot in regard to the main event of SummerSlam, Randy Savage vs Ultimate Warrior. First, there was a live interview hosted by Mean Gene Okerlund with Warrior. During the interview, Ric Flair appeared and told the Warrior that Savage had been in negotiation with Mr. Perfect, with Savage wanting Perfect to be his manager at Slam. Warrior got very excited and starting bounding on his chest like Tarzan, trying to get over to the crowd as though he was upset to hear this. Later, Mean Gene did another interview with Savage and Perfect appeared on the scene. He told Savage that after Warrior heard the news of their negotiations, Warrior called him up about him managing Warrior at Slam. Perfect then rambled on about how is the greatest manager in wrestling today and how everybody wants him as their manager. He then said that he would have to make a decision and that he would be in one of their corners at SummerSlam. Perfect left and then Mean Gene asked Randy Savage if he was really in negotiations with Perfect. Savage responded by saying, "Maybe I am, maybe I'm not." Savage then said that he would enter the ring at Slam as champ, and that he would leave the ring as champ. He did his Macho posing and left to the cheering of the fans. It appeared as though he is still a face. In the last interview with Mean Gene of the night, Jimmy Hart came out with a piece of paper claiming that it was an official contract stating that his tag team, the Nasty Boys, would be wrestling in the main event of

SummerSlam against Warrior & Savage. Mean Gene ended the short interview by saying that he didn't believe it and he would have to investigate the matter. These interviews have left a very large cloud of confusion over the whole situation between Savage and Warrior.

In another angle shot, during a Bret Hart squash match, Papa Shango came out and stood in the aisle watching Hart's match and then left a couple of minutes later. Then, two matches later, Papa Shango had a squash match and after it he beat on the jobber. He even broke his voodoo stick in halve after beating on the preliminary. As he was about to do in the jobber, Bret Hart came out and held back Shango for about a minute. Bret Hart then left and Shango was disgusted and most of all, confused. If they are going to do a Shango-Hart program, then this was a pretty lousy setup for it.

Another angle shot was to setup the Kamala-Undertaker match at SummerSlam. Kamala had just finished his squash match and was leaving, but he got lost and forgot where to go, so he climbed over the railing surrounding the ring and started walking through the crowd. Kimchee & Dr. Wippleman brought him back to his senses and guided him down the right aisle back to dressing room. As they were leaving, Undertaker started his entrance down the aisle for his squash match with Chris Duffy. Kamala and Undertaker met halfway down the aisle and engaged in a stare down. Paul Bearer was trying to hold back Undertaker as Wippleman & Kimchee were trying to hold back Kamala. Kamala's gang wound up dragging and pushing him to get him back to the dressing room. This was also a pretty weak setup.

There were a couple of new entrances into Titan at the 7/20 tapings in Worcester as Carlos Espada (known as Konan in Mexico) finally made his much-anticipated debut in the WWF. He wrestled under the name Electrico and defeated a guy named the Mercenary (Miguel Gonzalez). The lights were dimmed as Electrico came out with his Liger-type outfit, which shot out small fireworks and streamers from the armbands. He did a lot of remarkable high-flying moves in his 5:45 match, which the crowd was amazed at, but not accustomed to. The other new faces were managed by Afa the Samoan. Samu & Kokina, plainly called the Samoans, wrestled a slightly-impressive squash match against Phil Apollo & Jim Brunzell. The former SST ended the match with Kokina splashing the opponent after jumping off Samu's shoulders.

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WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

On 7/20, before a partially-naked house in Worcester, MA, the WWF held their Superstars tapings. The building was very hot and the length of the tapings was even worse. It started at 7:30 and lasted until 12:15. They held 31 matches: Kato beat Phil Apollo. Jim Powers beat Bob Bradley. Rick Martel pinned Sgt Slaughter after hitting him in the jaw with his spray can. Tatanka beat Iron Mike Sharpe. The Natural Disasters beat Money Inc when Quake pinned IRS to capture the WWF Tag Team Championships in 9:47. Nailz beat Flex Armstrong. Bret Hart beat Richie Rich by submission. British Bulldog beat Iron Mike Sharpe. Papa Shango beat Scott jobber. Razor Ramon beat Van Damme. Natural Disasters beat Brian Donahue & a jobber. Kamala beat Ross Greenburg. Shawn Michaels beat Jim Powers. Berzerker beat Jason Knight by countout. Bret Hart pinned Mountie. British Bulldog beat Repo Man. Electrico pinned Mercenary. Big Bossman pinned Skinner. Kamala beat Joe Steele. Undertaker beat Chris Duffy. Money Inc (beltless) beat Jerry Seavey & Joe McCleavey (after the match DiBiase stuffed a $100 bill in the loser's mouth and IRS then took it out and put in his pocket). Razor Ramon beat Jim Powers. Samoans beat Jim Brunzell & Phil Apollo. Repo Man & Beverly Brothers beat Bushwhackers & Jim Duggan when Beverly pinned Luke after hitting him with the Genius' scroll. Crush beat Joe Lane by submission. Jim Duggan beat Iron Mike Sharpe (Duggan cut Sharpe's lip and was pissed off because the WWF officials were handing out ice cream bars to the fans to tape them eating them, thus nobody was paying attention to the match). Razor Ramon (third squash match of the night, half of the crowd cheered him, has a cult following) beat Tony Roy. Big Bossman beat Nailz by DQ when Nailz used the nightstick and after the match Nailz gave the Bossman another beating with Goulet, Hebner, Garea, Strongbow, all being chased around the ring by Nailz' swinging nightstick maneuvers (Strongbow had to leap out of the way, what a sight). Randy Savage & Bret Hart beat Ric Flair & Shawn Michaels when Savage pinned Michaels after getting rammed into Sherri (17:18, match-not as good as it could have been, about half of the house had left at this point because it was after 12am). Undertaker & the man that he had stuffed in a coffin, Ultimate Warrior, beat Kamala (was supposed to be Berzerker, but they switched it) & Papa Shango when Undertaker pinned Shango (juiced) after a tombstone. Some interesting notes from the show: As the fans were entering the arena, they had to trash any signs they made up. Titan officials brought out a few of their "homemade" posters that they gave to fans to hold up. A car load of WWF merchandise was distributed to the fans in the first couple of rows and the camera crew focused on them the whole night. There was a lot of unintentional juice as Mike Sharpe's lip was cut during his match with Duggan, Bossman's nose was bleeding during his match with Nailz, and Shango had a cut on his head that juiced heavily during the last match.

The next night, 7/21, in Portland, ME, they held 31 matches at the Wrestling Challenge tapings before another awful crowd: Jim Powers beat Kato. Jim Brunzell beat Big Sledge. Skinner beat Mike Moraldo. Samoans beat Tony Ulysses & Phil Apollo. They did an interview with Money Inc about the title loss and how they defeated LOD before and that they should have no problem doing it again at SummerSlam, but near the end of the interview, the audio system broke and they stopped it. Berzerker beat Jerry Seavey by countout. Bret Hart beat Bob Bradley by submission. They re-taped the interview hosted by Mean Gene with Money Inc and they said the same exact things, word for word, then they went to the ring and defeated Tony Roy & Dan Dubio. New WWF Tag Team Champions, the Natural Disasters, beat Tony DeVito & Mike

Bell. Next, they did an interview with Afa the Samoan and he introduced Kokina Maximus and they talked about how he is a big volcano that will be spreading across the WWF and that all the other wrestlers should watch out. Bushwhackers beat Nasty Boys by DQ when Knobbs used Hart's helmet, and after the match, the Nasties beat on the old Sheepherders until Duggan made the save with the 2x4 (This match is a setup for the SummerSlam match with the Nasties & Mountie vs Bushwhackers & Jim Duggan- again?). Crush beat Richie Rich by submission. Shawn Michaels beat Scott Taylor, and during the match, Rick Martel walked around the ring trying to bother Michaels. Big Bossman beat Joe Richards. Razor Ramon beat Jerry Seavey. Jim Powers beat Chris Duffy. Shawn Michaels beat Tony DeVito, and Martel did the same thing in this one. High Energy & Natural Disasters (an odd mix) beat Money Inc & Beverly Brothers when KoKo Ware pinned Blake. Next, Mean Gene did an interview with Warrior and Flair came out- same exact thing as the one the night before. Nailz beat Phil Apollo by submission. Kamala pinned Flex Armstrong. Papa Shango beat Paul Van Damme. Undertaker beat Kato. High Energy & Tito Santana beat Nasty Boys & Repo Man when Knobbs used Repo's rope. J.W. Storm, managed by Jimmy Hart, pinned Brian Donahue with a modified frankensteiner. Electrico beat Miguel Gonzalez (same guy as the Mercenary from the night before). Tatanka beat Skinner. The Mountie beat Tim McNeely. Bret Hart beat Shawn Michaels in a ladder match- They put a ladder at the entrance aisle and hung the IC belt by a wire over the ring, and the winner had to get the hanging belt by using the ladder (14:36, best match of the night). High Energy beat Brooklyn Brawler & Mike Sharpe. Virgil beat Vito Cruz by submission. Razor Ramon beat Joe Steele. Randy Savage & Undertaker beat the team of Ric Flair & get this, the Berzerker (how can they team a true wrestling legend with a joker, Flair must have been a happy camper during this!) when Randy Savage pinned Berzerker after a double ax-handle off the top rope. Ultimate Warrior pinned Papa Shango.

It looks as though there will be eleven matches at SummerSlam, being taped on Aug. 29 in London, England, and being shown on pay-per-view in the states on Aug. 31. Ultimate Warrior vs Randy Savage, Bret Hart vs British Bulldog, LOD vs Money Inc, Undertaker vs Kamala, Disasters vs Beverlies, Papa Shango vs Texas Tornado (although there is word that he was fired because of no-shows and doing things that are against company policy), Crush vs Repo Man in a meeting of former Demolition tag team partners, Berzerker vs Tatanka, Nailz vs Virgil, Nasty Boys & Mountie vs Bushwhackers & Jim Duggan, and Shawn Michaels vs Rick Martel is expected to be added to the card. The lineup is pretty poor and probably will not do too well on PPV. It's amazing that High Energy isn't booked on the card, but the Bushwhackers are. Ric Flair is expected to do a live interview either majorly hinting at or actually starting a program with Mr. Perfect, which should be the best Titan feud of the year. Roddy Piper is expected to do an interview segment or a Piper's Pit. The reason the Pits that were taped at the tapings right after WrestleMania weren't aired is because Piper personally doesn't like them and would be ashamed to let them air. Also not wrestling on the card are Big Bossman, which makes no sense because he's in one of Titan's hottest feuds right now with Nailz, who's wrestling Virgil on the card, just doesn't make any sense. Tito Santana and Razor Ramon aren't booked on the card and that match could be a possible feud, considering Ramon's crude gimmick.

Talk of Marty Jannetty returning in the near future has died down as he is still under house arrest and is only working some independent shows. It is possible for him to come back after four months and start a feud with Shawn Michaels, which would be a nice addition to Titan's cards.. The Randy Savage tribute shown on tv was done to rid the fans' minds of Elizabeth, as she was nowhere to be seen in that video....A lot of house shows around the country before SummerSlam are going to be seeing the main event of Randy Savage vs Ric Flair with guest referee, Hacksaw Jim Duggan. At least he can keep an eye on Savage and Flair in the ring, while keeping his other wandering eye on Mr. Perfect. When you look at the situation like that, he would make a pretty good ref. What did Bobby Heenan used to call him, a cock-eyed moron. Other main events before Slam see Warrior & Undertaker vs Shango & Berzerker or in singles matches....Sherri Martel wants to get off the road, but is afraid she'll lose her job. She was fined $1,000 recently for violating one of the company's policies....At a house show in Tampa, FL, on 7/17, there was a new referee in Titan, Bill Alphonso....Scott Hall's skits as Razor Ramon are both hilarious and so stereotypical, playing a bandito.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

Most recently in WCW, there has been numerous mentions of the name Ric Flair. Bill Watts has claimed on tv that Flair has called him and then Jim Ross told everyone to call the hot line for more information on the subject. On the hot line, he suggests that Ric Flair is very interested in returning to WCW and Ross also said don't be too surprised to see it happen. It very well could be true that Flair wants to return to WCW, but he is locked in a contract with the WWF until the late summer of 1993. He also might not be happy in Titan, and teaming with the likes of Berzerker and others doesn't exactly cheer him up, but the only way he could leave is if Titan released him from it. It was said that Titan tried to make a deal with WCW, where they would let Flair out of his contract, allowing him to go to WCW, if WCW let Lex Luger out of his contract, allowing him to wrestle for the WWF earlier than he is allowed to, which is in March of 1993. The offer was apparently turned down by WCW. It would have been a good trade as Luger would suit the WWF's future and Flair would be more of an asset to WCW. Recently, Sting had a private meeting with Vince McMahon to just break the ice and explore all possibilities that could arise. Sting may think that he is going to pushed out of the picture in WCW, so he might want to look over all his possibilities, which is pretty smart on his part. They could do the contract trade game between Flair & Sting as it might benefit both organizations. Anyway, Watts might be looking too far ahead with this Flair thing, but he continues to mention him a lot on tv, more than he's mentioning Terry Taylor.

It has been reported that Terry Taylor is on his way out of WCW, which is surprising because of the past working relationship between the two, back to the UWF days. Taylor's pay has been decreased as well as his importance to the organization. He is still the most underrated wrestler. If he were to depart from WCW, where would he go? The last time he had to keep the money coming in, he made a fool of himself as he was the Red Rooster in the WWF's circus of farm creature characters.

With Big Van Vader now WCW Champion," it appears as though he'll meet a lot of different contenders, like the old days when a champion wouldn't just wrestle the same guy around the country for half a year. The interviews airing on tv, express that all of WCW's top draws are gunning for the belt. This is a smart way for Watts to buildup his champion as indestructible, something that they didn't do with Sting. Somewhere down the road, maybe Halloween Havoc, expect Ron Simmons to defeat Vader and become the next champion.

David Sammartino, now living in Atlanta, called up the WCW, trying to get booked, but Watts turned him down as Cowboy Bill knows that David quit the WWF seven times and wasn't considered reliable....The NWA Heavyweight Championship tournament will take place in Japan starting Aug. 6. Big Van Vader was pulled from the tourney....The WCW is taping tv in Baltimore, MD, on Aug. 2. The tv crew will also be in Philadelphia on Aug. 1, which is a sign that more things are going to happen at house shows....The July 18 big outdoor stadium show reportedly only drew about 1,600 people, could be wrong, but all the details on the show haven't been received yet. Titan did one of their first house shows there in a long while on July 11, maybe to hurt WCW's attendance.

THE INDEPENDENT SCENE

On June 28, Buddy Rogers past away. Then Uncle Elmer died. Now, in the month of July, old-time wrestlers Spudnick Monroe, Danny McShain, and Gorgeous George Arena have passed on. This wasn't the original Gorgeous George though, as George Wagner passed away in 1963. George Arena proclaimed that he was the original and he even went to court over the rights to the name. He died of bone cancer in Boca Raton, FL, on July 16, and he was 84 years old....Ricky Morton won the USWA Championship at the Mid-South Coliseum in Memphis, TN, on 7/13 as he defeated Eddie Gilbert. That area is hot right now and Lawler's son, Brian Christopher, is their next big superstar as he is great on interviews and especially in the ring. The Moondogs are also tearing Memphis apart with their awesome brawling, it's wild down there. In the future weeks, this newsletter is going to start covering this group regularly more and more. Sports Channel should wake up and take off the stuff on there now and bring us Memphis....On 7/24 at the Northeast Philadelphia National Guard Armory, the World Wide Wrestling Alliance will make its debut. The heavyweight champion will be decided as Jimmy Snuka meets Jack Hammer, Steve Savage & Jim the Messenger meet the Powers of Pain (Warlord & Barbarian) for the tag team titles, Rustee "The Fox" Thomas wrestles Heidi Lee Morgan for the ladies title, Dennis Diamond meets Johnny Rebel, King Kaluha vs Larry Winters, Johnny Hotbody vs Tony "Hitman" Stetson, and Randy the He-Man vs Playboy John. They will be in Orwigsburg, PA, the next night with the same talent. Call the promoter at (215) 362-7184 for more details about either show....On the night of 7/24, Jimmy Snuka will wrestle early on a card being held in New York City for promoter Tommy Dee, then is going to drive down to Philly to make the WWWA show. Tight scheduling you might say. Then he'll wrestle on 7/25 in Orwigsburg, PA, for the WWWA. On 7/26 in Elmhurst, NY, Snuka will wrestle Ax from Demolition, along with others stars such as Mike Sharpe....Tony "The Godfather" Capone, promoter of the NAWA which currently airs on Sports Channel on Sundays at 4:30pm Eastern Standard Time, is promoting a card in Palmetto, FL, on 7/25. The main event is Marty Jannetty vs Jim Neidhart. Capone is going to team up Jannetty & Mr. Electricity and call them "Rock & Shock" sometime soon....John Arezzi's Weekend of Champions III fans convention will be held on 8/29 and 8/30 at the Ramada Hotel at LaGuardia Airport in Elmhurst, Queens, NY. Scheduled to appear are Jushin "Thunder" Liger, Killer Kowalski, Jerry "The King" Lawler, "Hotstuff" Eddie Gilbert, Wendi Richter, Nikolai Volkoff. There will also be a special reunion between Larry Zbyszko and Bruno Sammartino. There was a scheduled reunion between the Valiant Brothers, but Johnny has a prior engagement. Jimmy Valiant will appear though, with his former manager, Captain Lou Albano. Super Ticket packages are available for

$70 which gets you admission to both days. Also included in this deal, you get autographs, 8x10 photos, and 11x14 lithographs of all the stars, a souvenir T-shirt and program, guaranteed admission to the Saturday night Q & A session, and you will be allowed to enter the convention before all the others without Super Tickets. To make reservations for the Super Ticket or are interested in buying dealer tables, call John Arezzi at (516) 587-2861....Dennis Coralluzzo and the WWA will hold two big cards on 8/28 at the Route 30 Marketplace (Clementon Coliseum, so named by Dennis) in Clementon, NJ, and on 8/29 at the high school in Williamstown, NJ. On these cards, expect to see Lawler, Gilbert, and other stars that will be at the Weekend of Champions convention that weekend....Eastern Championship Wrestling held a card on 7/14 at the Sports Bar in Philadelphia, PA, before about 275 people. Flame Mr. Perez pinned Jimmy Jannetty, King Kaluha & Scott Summers beat J.T. Smith & Hurricane Curry, Mr. Sandman pinned Larry Winters after interference from Johnny Hotbody, Samaon Warrior beat Jack Hammer by DQ, ECW Tag Team Champs Super Destroyers beat Nightbreed, Tommy Cairo beat Damien Stone, Vladimir Markov & Super Ninja beat Chris Michaels (wrestled at 6/30 WWF tv tapings as Bill Pierce) & Nikolai Volkoff, Tony Stetson wrestled Wildman Sal Bellomo (has a fetish for throwing chairs) to a double-DQ, and Jimmy Snuka pinned Johnny Hotbody with the Superfly leap to win the ECW Championship for his second time. The next night, 7/15, in Philadelphia, PA, at the Chestnut Cabaret, they only drew 100 people, but the only over 21 crowd had a rowdy and wild night. Hurricane Curry beat the Anchor. In a battle royal, Larry Winters and Johnny Hotbody were the last two men left, gaining the right to wrestle each other later in the card for the ECW Tv Championship. Scott Summers & Super Ninja beat Nightbreed and after the match Max Thrasher attacked his Nightbreed partner, Glen Osbourne. Tommy Cairo pinned Damien Stone. J.T. Smith (with his new valet, Tigra, who took off her clothes, leaving a G-string, much to the delight of the men in the audience) pinned King Kaluha. Nikolai Volkoff pinned Vladimir Markov. In a pins count anywhere in the building match, Tony Stetson pinned Wildman Sal Bellomo on the bar, after Bellomo's manager, Stevie Wonderful hit Stetson with a chair (the match was a wild brawl and they used ladders, chairs, trash cans- should have been called a "home hardware match"). The two winners of the battle royal wrestled each other to decide the first ECW TV Champ, but the match ended in a no-contest. ECW Champ Jimmy Snuka beat Mr. Sandman after the leap off the top rope. They return on 8/11 at the Philly Sports Bar with Snuka vs Super Destroyer #1, Hotbody vs Winters in a rematch to decide the tv champ, Bellomo vs Stetson in a Lumberjack Match, Jack Hammer vs Mr Sandman, J.T. Smith & Soul Train Phillips vs the Flames, and Tommy Cairo vs Damien Stone. ECW starts up on cable TV Thursday nights at 7pm starting on 8/6. On Greater Media Cable- Channel 74, Delaware County Suburban Cable- Channel 31, Harron Cable- Channel 2, Northeast Philly Comcast Cable - Channel 70, and Bala Cynwyd Comcast Cable- Channel 52. In the near future, J.T. Smith with valet Tigra will probably feud with Mr. Sandman and his valet Peaches. A few problems have arisen for Chester "CN" Redd and will most likely not find work anymore. He had a few disputes with several promoters, especially when he went to the WWF tv tapings as J.A. Gooden from Blue Bell, PA. J. stands for Joel, A. was Joel Goodhart's middle initial, and Joel's new insurance business is located in Blue Bell....Larry Sharpe has moved to Florida and is operating his Monster Factory Wrestling School in Tampa, and is going to start his independent group there soon. The Spider (Glen Ruth) now operates the Monster Factory in South Jersey.

FLYER FAN FARE

Punch up pro-wrestling's hottest hotline by calling 1-900-820-2010, the longest running hotline in the history of professional wrestling. It's $2 a call, and kids have to get parental permission. Hear red hot gossip, wild lifestyles, sizzling scandals, bizarre things, and everything you wanted to know about professional wrestling. New reports daily at 12 noon Eastern time.

The Dr. Kay Fabe's Insider Wrestling News Line is a call away at 1-900-990-6676, with sheet information, latest updates, interviews, rumors/gossip, analysis/opinion, and ask Dr. Kay Fabe Q & A. It's $.95 per minute and people under 18 must get parental permission.

The "Who's Slammin' Who" radio show can be heard every Wednesday evenings from 6-7pm on 88.7 WPSC-FM out of Wayne, NJ, which is hosted by "Radical" Ric Rocker.

The "Inside The Squared Circle" radio show can be heard every Saturdays from 4:30-6pm on WMET 1150-AM out of Gaithersburg, MD.

Brett Whalen of 4253 N. Gale Rd., Davison, MI 48423-8912, has a four page information sheet available for $4. It lists real names, places of residence, facts, and birthdays on today's wrestling superstars.

ATTENTION ALL FLYER SUBSCRIBERS: We are looking for responsible correspondents for live arena results. If any of you attend a show, could you please call (215) 566-6590 within the next day after the event and leave the results and any interesting notes on the show after the message. When leaving the results, remember to also name the arena and the town it was held in, as well as your name and address, as we will add 1 issue to your current subscription with us. For non-Flyer subscribers, we will send you out a free issue. *No events held in the Philadelphia area needed.

The Wrestling Flyer Newsletter is a bi-weekly publication available by subscription for $1.50 ($2.25 for orders outside US) per issue. **Please make all payments payable to the editor, John Clark.** Each issue is eight pages containing fascinating interviews, fresh inside news, articles, results, and a great color photo accompanies each newsletter. The color photo with issue #7 is of Brian Pillman.

The interview with Bruno Sammartino starting on the next page was reprinted from an earlier edition of The Wrestling Flyer. Part 2 of the interview will be in the next issue.

A FLYER INTERVIEW WITH "THE LIVING LEGEND" BRUNO SAMMARTINO

It gives The Wrestling Flyer Newsletter great pleasure to bring the Living Legend, Bruno Sammartino to you in a full length interview. The man from Abruzzi, Italy, is considered by many to be the greatest professional wrestler in history. He held the WWWF Championship for over ten years. He is one of the most honest and respected individuals that can be found in wrestling today. He is a class act and has always taken great pride in what he does best, wrestling. He was once very proud of the sport, but now he is very saddened about what is going on in wrestling today. He would like to see wrestling return to the way it once was. One thing is known, as Bruno's opinions and thoughts will be valued by wrestling fans in generations to come. His personality will be restored in every wrestling fans' mind. The Flyer hopes you enjoy the following fascinating interview with the man, Bruno Sammartino.

WF: Could you please tell us how you got started in pro wrestling.

BS: After I came over from Europe, I started training with the weights, I went to a six month language school but then I went to Shandley High School, that's a high school here, they had no wrestling team, but one of the coaches over there was good friends with a guy named Rex Perry, who was the wrestling coach at the University of Pittsburgh. He arranged for me to go to the Pitt Fieldhouse at the University of Pittsburgh. I used to go from Shandley High School, after I got out of school, and I used to walk a couple of miles walk and I would go to the Pitt Fieldhouse and workout with the Pitt wrestlers. So I would do that three days a week and every other day and every other day, I'd be pumping iron, because I was trying to gain size & strength. I continued to do that for years, finally I got up to about 265-270, where I got good in weights, where I was competing in both Olympic lifting and power lifting, but I maintained working out my workouts up at Pitt. Then, 1959, I was in Oklahoma City, where I was competing in the national weightlifting championships and when I came back, Bob Prince who use to be the voice of the Pittsburgh Pirates, he had his own television show and he invited me on his show, as I knew him, to talk about my winning that contest and along the way, he asked me if I was still going up to the Pitt Fieldhouse for the wrestling, cause he knew my love for wrestling too. While this was going on, Rudy Miller, who was working for Capital Wrestling, that was before it became the WWWF, he saw the show and he contacted me to some people, met with them, and told them yeah that it was my ambitions to become professional wrestler. I went to Washington, DC, where Vince McMahon and his partner, along with Rudy Miller, worked out there for two months at a place called the Capital Arena and then I got my first pro-fessional match.

WF: When Vince, Jr. took over the promotion from Vince, Sr, did you see the promotion changing then?

BS: Well, I retired in 1981. In the latter part of 1983 or the beginning of 1984, that's when Vince McMahon, Sr, who unfortunately had an incurable disease and he was dying and Jr., I don't know how it took place, but then Jr. took over. Years ago, because some of us thought that he (Jr.) was rather bizarre in different ways, we used to kid around and say, boy could you imagine if this guy ever took over his dad's business, what the heck would become of professional wrestling. There were remarks like that being made, but when he took over and he contacted me, I think it was the beginning of August of 1984, and he more less painted a picture, best I can recall, that he wanted to keep in his father's tradition and who better to more less be in the organization, maybe a little advisor, besides being a color commentator, than Bruno Sammartino, who had been in the organization for so long. I don't know why in the world I believed the guy, but I came back as a color commentator and it didn't take very long to see that there were going to be drastic changes and of course, I didn't like it and it depressed me as time went on as to why other people were calling him a genius. What I believed and I spoke to different people about was that it appears that way now because of all this bizarreness, it's attracting a lot of attention, but in reality, it's chasing the real wrestling fans away because they don't buy this and these present fans that are coming in for all this, there not going to be the lasting fans, there not going to be the fans that keep coming back. I remember when I was wrestling and go to Madison Square Garden, Boston Garden, or Philadelphia, where ever, and as far as my eyes would take me, I would see those same familiar faces. I said we've

lost those and these new fans, they're not going to be like those fans, and some people disagreed with me and thinking that I was living in the past and refused to see the future, but I absolutely never believed that this was going to be a long time success and I predicted that in a matter of 5-6 years that you would see a drastic nose dive and I think it's just about coming that because the bizarreness that he brought into the game, I knew that they would loose what I call the real fans and they did.

WF: What are some of the differences between the promotion when you worked for Vince Sr., and when you worked for Vince, Jr.?

BS: When I worked for Vince, Sr., I don't want to give the impression that everything was peaches and pie and everything was rosy, there were things even back then that I know myself I did not like, I used to discuss with Vince McMahon, the old man as we called him, because of some, for example gimmicks I didn't buy, I never liked the gimmicks in wrestling because I felt that all they did was bring criticism to the game, I felt that that's not what the people really payed to see. I used to argue that if they were of such value, why was it that, for example, I was on top and not they. If they he so believed that there was such value in them, why not have them as headliners, which he would do. So, there was some of that stuff going on so I don't want paint a picture that there wasn't. But, in comparison, very little. Take what's happened since he (Jr.) took over. First of all, as far as gimmicks go, almost everybody has a gimmick, whether it's painted faces or martian like outfits, or for a while the Bulldogs with their dog and somebody with the parrot, snake with Jake the Snake, and for a while there was even a little crocodile that Steamboat had. For the almighty dollar, it seems like there's no limit, for example when the war was breaking in the Middle East, it seemed like they tried to capitalize with the Sgt Slaughter and Hogan running around with the flag and he's swearing that he's going to beat this traitor in Wrestlemania. It's just like, no scruples, just disgusting. And then of course, in my day, I've seen some guys with some bad habits, maybe like to drink too much, which of course is a terrible thing because alcohol can I guess be as dangerous as drugs. But, unless I was being very naive, I really didn't see that many people that were abusing alcohol, there were some, but I didn't see drugs, then all of a sudden with McMahon this steroid situation was really rapid and other drugs as well. It just became a very ugly, ugly business and when they say that it's family entertainment and they gear it towards the children, that's the saddest, because these kids that look at these guys and want to be like them, they are aware of the steroids and so it encourages the young kids to get involved with steroids. It's bad for the kids, but for the business itself, it's become such a cartoon show that nobody, I mean nobody takes it seriously. Regardless of what anybody says, years ago a great portion of the people took it much more seriously, it was evident by some of the things that I personally experienced, for example, when Zbyszko and I wrestled they had to escort him, not only in and out of the ring, but to and from the arena. When Stan Hansen broke my neck, people were so angry at this guy that he'd have to have an escort to the arena and back home and what have you. People did take it seriously, and now, it's like a cartoon show and also in my day a lot of the guys did display a lot more wrestling. Today, you see just about zero, the wrestling part of it is non-existent. I brawled, but I also wrestled. If somebody saw some matches with myself from films and say, yeah but you were brawling. But, maybe those matches that they saw were finale matches, like if I wrestled Ivan Koloff, the third match would be a Texas Death Match or some kind of a brawling match, but maybe if they saw the first ones they might see some good wrestling too. I wrestled Pedro Morales in Shea Stadium for an hour and 15-17 minutes. It was pure, clean, scientific wrestling. The point I'm making is that the majority of those people, they did and had the ability and did display good wrestling, along with some other stuff.

WF: When you were with Vince McMahon and your son, David, entered, was he upset about the way they treated him?

BS: I don't know how unhappy he was, but I can tell you I was extremely unhappy because the last thing I wanted in the world I wanted to do was put on the tights. But, what happened was that McMahon was trying to get me to put on the tights back on, he said that it would be great for David and he let David think that you know you and father, this would be a great boost for you. David believed it, I really didn't, but I went along with it, but I despise it because number two things, at this stage in my life, the last thing I want is to put on tights and number two, I just didn't feel that at my age and the injuries that I had had, that I wasn't going to try and go out there and try to be Bruno of yesteryear. That to me is if I couldn't be at least the best I could be, it would be embarrassing to me number one when I knew I wouldn't be up to par performance wise and number two it was embarrassing to me because when I saw the changes in wrestling, I didn't want to be part of what was now so called wrestling. But I did it because the promises that David believed was going to do for him, which I really didn't buy. But then David became disillusioned when he would see that after he an I wrestled as a team, that once I take the tights off, David would go right back and be used as a preliminary boy. So he became frustrated and angry and he started behaving a little, how should I say it, he wasn't using his best judgement, out of anger and frustration he would quit. Well, by him quitting, I knew that there would be really no places to go, I knew that because David can be a bit of a hard-head and might want to come back. So I got caught in one heck of a situation, I knew that in order for me to get him back, I had to things that I never did in my life, and that is give into things that I didn't believe in, for example, McMahon would ask me to put on the tights again, me and Orndorff as a team against Orton and Piper. He knew that I wouldn't refuse it because he too figured that David may want to come back and I'd have to ask him to take him back. So I was caught in this kind of a situation, it was very frustrating for me and very miserable and finally I told my kid, I said, look, if you're going to stay with this guy, stay, if you're going to leave, leave for good because I'm not going to allow myself to be used by this guy as he's doing right now because he knows that every time you quit, he can make demands on me because that's the only way you can be brought back. Finally, I just couldn't take it anymore, I so despised everything about it and when I saw my opportunity to leave because of a contract that I had and what have you, when the

thing was came to a conclusion, then I just left. I left in February of 1988.

WF: What was your role in WWF when you left, were you commentating?

BS: You might say I was, and I was not (commentating). When I came back in September 11, 1984, I started back, I started back as a color commentator, but when I saw as things went on and then he went from two commentators to three. By this time I saw what they wanted, they didn't want it to be serious, stuff that just wasn't for me and then I was just biding my time, waiting for my contract and I just wasn't really participating, some people would criticize me, calling me the silent partner. But that was my choice because I just didn't feel comfortable in playing the part that they wanted. I just shut up, I just wouldn't say anything the only thing I would do is the replay. If he (Vince, Jr.) would try to get me into a little confrontation with Jesse Ventura, basically I wouldn't bite, I would just make a remark or so and stay out of it.

WF: After you left, how did you feel when they would make a mockery of your ring career and the term, The Living Legend?

BS: Well, you have to understand the mentality here with McMahon. They started calling the Living Legend way back in the late 60s, it got to where it was so established, that people just started calling me the Living Legend. I'm still wrestling 12-13 years later, and people were still, so it was so established that when McMahon wanted to discredit me, even after '81, there was some heat between me and them. They brought in Salvitore Bellomo. They hurt the poor guy. Here's an innocent guy, through no fault to his, he was being booed by the fans, why, because of the stupidity of McMahon, because they were mad at me because of a couple things that had happened, they started praising Bellomo as perhaps the greatest Italian wrestler of all time. Now, he wasn't saying it, Bellomo wasn't saying anything, the poor guy goes in the ring and he's doing the best he can, and he was a pretty talented fellow, but they were saying it broadcasting, McMahon says many experts say that this is the greatest wrestler of all time, that their way of trying to discredit me, like this guy was better than I was. But, the fans took offense to that. Then McMahon so terribly wanted to get Sammartino forgotten, that every step he took, it would backfire. Billy Graham, the living legend, and when they mention living legend, people identify that name with me. To this day, he wants to do something to take away from that, look at now Hulk Hogan, they're actually calling him the immortal, Hulk Hogan, and that's flying like a lead balloon. McMahon, that's where people think he's smart, in some area maybe he is, but in some other areas he's an idiot. Because instead of going on and do what's best for whom ever, whether it be Bellomo or Billy Graham or somebody else, he's trying to discredit me, in reality he hurt other people. Look at Madison Square Garden, they have a certain section of people who have contributed to MSG, and when it comes to wrestling, they have Hulk there, but I'm not there. I don't think it's MSG, I think it's McMahon who used whatever, influence, or whatever to the Garden. I don't even want to be there, because if the Garden is that pathetic to be influenced by a Vince McMahon as to who they feel should be recognized, than who even wants to be there. Is he having such success in the Garden, that they have to meet to his every demand because they couldn't survive without him and his wrestling (there not even drawing anything there). In my day, we did draw and I appeared there over 200 times. Nobody, as an individual, I'm not talking about basketball or hockey, because these fellows probably play there for who knows how many hundreds of times, but as a single performer, I wrestled there 211 times. You tell me anybody whose ever come anywhere near that. This guy (Hogan) gets credit that he doesn't deserve. First of all, I'd like to see McMahon have the guts to put Hogan, 1 year, on every MSG show, for twelve straight shows. People would get tired of him after the second show. He's never come in two shows in a row to where the second time the house didn't drop. It changed because the wrestler of today, like Hulk Hogan, he's not a wrestler. In my career, if I wrestled Hens Mortier, we use to have 1 hour, it would be 1 hour of wrestling, because that was his style, that's what he was best at. But, if I wrestled a guy like Buddy Rogers or Baron Scicluna, the type of scoop slams, arm-drags, it's called the high spots. If that was there specialty, I would do that. If I wrestled a strong guy, we would do a lot of strong stuff. If I wrestled Tanaka (Toru) we would do a combination of some wrestling, some karate and stuff like that. If you weren't able to do that, then you would be a routine guy, to where every month you were basically the same, like a guy like Hogan is. That doesn't hold, that doesn't last. That's why even McMahon, and he admitted that he could not put Hogan in the same arena back to back, he can do it once, but like he can't keep going with it. Here's a guy (Hogan) whose been with McMahon since 1984, which is 8 years, and I bet you if you counted all the times he's been in MSG, by himself, I bet you it hasn't been 25 times. (Hogan only wrestles weekends) But, I use to wrestle 7 days a week when I was champion. My first reign, from 1963 -1971, I use to wrestle 7 days one week and then 6 days one week. The seventh day, when I didn't wrestle, was a promise I made Frank Tunney, cause I use to go to Toronto, because he had been good to me back in 1961. So, I promised him, that I would still go when he needed every couple of weeks. I did that crazy schedule for 8 years. I was pretty much shot after 8 years, I ached from head to toe because I wasn't the type of a guy who would take any pain killers, any medication, I've always boasted and I still will, I haven't taken 10 aspirins in my lifetime, so I wrestled hurt a lot of times and I wrestled in a lot of pain, and after those 8 years I had had it, I had to get out, and I did and allowed the body to recuperate and then I actually enjoyed the business much more after I lost the belt, because I was wrestling at my own pace. Then, I was really having fun, I was really enjoying the business again, until McMahon (Sr.) called me up because things had really slacked off in New York, they were doing pretty bad and he asked me if I'd come back full-time for a while and then that's when Morales lost the belt to Stasiak and I came back and 1 year went to 2, 2 went to 3, 3 went to 4....

WF: What kind of role model do you think Hulk Hogan is?

BS: I think Hogan is a poor excuse of a human being. He's a greedy guy, look at, he's very greedy, and I'm not going to knock that